

Appl. No. 09/786,936  
Atty. Docket No. 7275  
Amdt. dated 10/29/2003  
Reply to Office Action of 7/31/03

#### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are now in the case. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the rheology of the surfactant paste used as the binder. Basis is in original Claim 3. (In view of this amendment, Claim 3 has been cancelled as redundant, and Claim 4 has been amended to depend from Claim 1.) Claim 1 has been amended to include the "upstream" language. Basis is at page 14, second paragraph. The "one or more" language with respect to the chopper blades has been removed. It is submitted that these amendments add no new matter, and entry is requested.

#### FORMAL MATTERS

For the record, there are no rejections/objections outstanding.

#### REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC 103

All claims stand rejected over U.S. 5,486,317, and separately over WO 97/32954, and separately over U.S. 6,274,544, for reasons of record at pages 2-3 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse all rejections.

At the outset, it is noted that there may be some misapprehension on the part of the Examiner with regard to the mixing apparatus. As noted in '544 (col. 5, l. 55-62), mixers can comprise various tools, including internal chopping blades, turbine-type blades on an axis of rotation, etc. In the present application (see p. 26, Example 2), the CB-30 mixer has pin tools for mixing and dispersing, whereas the KM-600 has choppers. Thus, "choppers" are a special type of mixing device well-known in the art. Stated simply, some mixers have choppers, and some do not.

The present invention is concerned with agglomerating detergent materials using defined agglomeration binders. In order for the binders to function optimally, they are provided in a particular size range.

The invention is directed to the means whereby that particular size range is achieved. In the instant invention, it is achieved by:

- 1.) Employing a binder with a defined rheology;
- 2.) Employing a mixer having choppers;
- 3.) Operating those choppers at a defined minimum speed; and
- 4.) Dispensing the binder directly at, or slightly upstream from, the choppers.

Turning to the cited documents, it is submitted that none of the disclosures found therein, taken singly or even in combination, teaches or suggests the present invention in the sense of §103.

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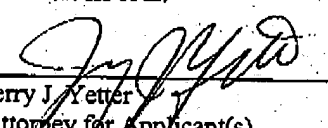
As noted in the previous amendments, '544 employs spray nozzles, rather than the choppers herein, to achieve the desired size.

Again, as previously noted, the abbreviated disclosure of binders in '317 neither teaches nor suggests the size, nor the present means for achieving the size, of the binder particles. The same is true of WO 97.

To summarize: (1) While '544 bespeaks binder size, it employs an entirely different method to achieve such size. (2) Neither '317 nor WO 97 adds anything to '544, in this regard. (3) There is no teaching or suggestion in any of the cited documents regarding the selection of binders having the herein-specified rheology, and to direct said binder at, or slightly upstream from, choppers in order to achieve the desired size. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are requested.

In light of the foregoing, early and favorable action in the case is requested.

Respectfully submitted,  
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